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1937  
*Buick*  
1938

# TORQUE TUBE

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS PUBLICATION  
FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB

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# THE 9TH CYLINDER

MARK JORDAN #1297-EDITOR



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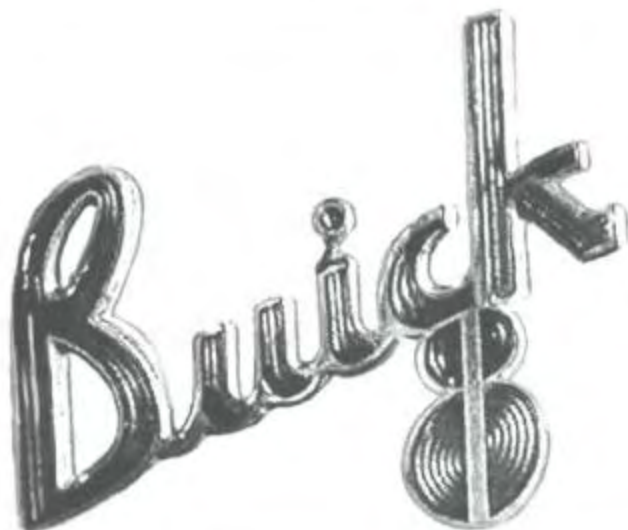
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**TORQUE TUBE**



As I'm sure you've noticed, *Torque Tube* has a new look. I thought it would be exciting to have a full color and glossy cover. The only trick to keeping this look will be to sell advertising on the inside front and back cover. So, if you know of any organizations that would be interested in advertising with us please have them give me a call. In the meantime, I will be sending out proposals to potential clients as well.

In the last issue I mentioned that I am going to be making products with our logo on it such as mugs, tee shirts and hats. They are not quite ready, but they will be by the fourth issue. One item that I have been asked about more than anything else is license plate and radiator badges. Unfortunately, I don't have a source for production, so I'm asking everyone out there to look around and let me know if you have a source. I have no problem handling the distribution and providing the artwork. I just received a complementary badge from [www.prewarcars.com](http://www.prewarcars.com). It is very nice, but they are located in the Netherlands, so I think their source is a little too far away.





In the technical tips section of our last issue we had a story on adapting your radio so a CD or tape player could be played through the original speaker. But, unfortunately, the pictures were out of order. In this issue you will find a separate page with the correct order. We are sorry about the mistake, and we hope this will make the process easier to understand.

One of our new members, **Leonard Golemba** (#1747), from Bellingham, Washington, joined our club after buying a 1938 model 46 in Auburn, California. It was in great condition when he purchased it, as you can see, and he has already won two trophies at local car shows. Leonard met **Peter and Carol Yanciw** (#1338), from North Vancouver, Canada, at an Antique Automobile Restorers Club event and they introduced him to our club.

Thank you Peter and Carol for your recruiting efforts.

Our new copy editor and new member **Thomas Burchfield** (#1772) would like to write an extensive story on 1937 and 1938 Buicks in the

movies. He is asking everyone to send him a list of movies (old and new) that have our cars in them. You can send him an email at: [TBDeluxe@aol.com](mailto:TBDeluxe@aol.com) or you can mail a



*Leonard Golemba's 1938 Model 46.*



*1937 Carlsbad Caverns Coach*



written list to the club address.

**Paul DeLucchi** (#1246) sent me this great photo, on the bottom of page 2, of a 1937 Buick Limousine with side-mounted spare tires. This car was part of the Carlsbad Cavern Coaches. The photo was taken at the Salt Beds Café, in New Mexico, on May 26, 1937.

Next is another photo sent in by Paul taken off of the Australian Buick web site: [www.buickclub.org.au](http://www.buickclub.org.au) of a 1937 Buick Limited ambulance.

Finally, while we are on the subject, here is a 1938 Buick ambulance from the Bell Ambulance Company.

**Ross Parson's** (#1713) one of a kind 1937 Buick Brewster Coach limousine was put up for sale on *eBay.com*. It was featured on the cover of our June 2003 issue. The auction for the Brewster Coach ended on December 23, 2003, but did not make the reserve. This one-off custom bodied limousine is in beautiful, original condition and has just undergone an extensive mechanical overhaul of all component systems including fuel, cooling, and electrical. There's also a rebuilt carburetor, fuel pump, generator and water pump, new voltage regulator and dual Optima 6-volt batteries, new tires, re-cored radiator and re-lined fuel tank.

Completely original with dual side mounts, guide lamps, and original interior down to the silk window shades, this rare car was certified by special application as a Full Classic by the Classic Car Club of America in 1973. Trimmed with gorgeous mahogany, the hand-built coach features all the classic



1937 Buick Ambulance



1938 Buick Ambulance



Ross Parson's 1937 Buick Brewster Coach Limousine

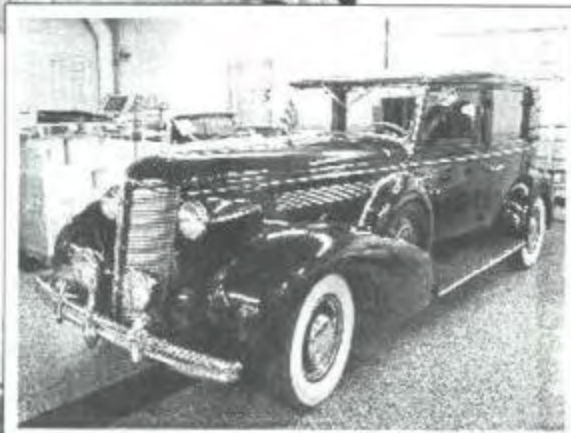
Brewster touches: dual glove boxes, dual mirrored vanities, four "suicide" doors, etc. The straight-8 OHV Buick motor produced more horsepower in 1937 than any other eight-cylinder production engine making this the most powerful Brewster-bodied car ever built.

Brewster Coach Works was the foremost





American carriage builder. Founded in 1815, they were the contracted builder for all of the Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts in the 1920's. Eventually, Rolls Royce actually purchased the company. Among their most famous clients was songwriter Cole Porter, (whose lyrics for "You're The Top" includes the line, "You're the top / You're a Brewster body.") This one of a kind Brewster was one of the last ever pro-



duced by the legendary coachbuilder. The company fell victim to the Great Depression and closed in 1938.

The roof and fenders have been repainted black, but the rest of the body retains the original Brewster green paint that was their signature color.

From the cowl to the back, the car is 100% original Brewster, even down to the Yale door locks with the Rol's Royce coded keys.



The car pictured below is not a '37 or a '38 but it is worth a mention. John Crabtree at Black Hills Antiques Auto has this 1939 Buick Special Henney Hearse for sale for which he is asking \$4,975.00. It is mostly complete and would make a great project car. You can call him at (605) 749-2242 if you are interested. The car is located in Newcastle, Wyoming.







While I'm on the subject of other cars, in the last issue I showed a picture of a 1941 Buick custom stretch limousine in Ken Schmit's *Buick Bonery*. One of our members saw this and sent Ken a picture of what it looked like new. I thought this would be of interest since it may be a one of a kind car.



One of our newest members is **Kjell Nilsen** (#1770) from Aalesund, Norway. He currently owns six 1938 Buicks, including a limousine. Here is a beautiful picture of one of his 1938s with fantastic scenery behind him. What a great place to take a drive!

I hope you enjoy the new look of the *Torque Tube*! I plan to try and make it this exciting every time!

Cheers!

*Mark*



# DRIVING OUT OF THE PAST

## Meeting Today's Challenges with Yesterday's World

By **Giancarlo Davis** (#1748)  
Photos by **Mark Jordan** (#1297)

**John Stokes'** (#1364) 1937 Buick Special has been resurrected. A victim of a horrendous accident, the car now stands gleaming in Stokes' garage in Millbrae, California. Instead of looking like it drove off a cliff, it now resembles something driven off the showroom floor. The beautiful silver-gray machine with its deep red interior has something to hide

though: it only looks like a 1930s car on the surface.

Like the Bionic Man, underneath its surface the car has been outfitted with a modern engine that makes it stronger, faster, and in many respects, better than it was before. "I have two other friends that own old cars," John says. "One owns a '36 and another owns a '38. No





matter how well tuned you got them and how well they ran, someone in a Honda was always running you off the road. They wouldn't let you onto the freeway, or frequently tailgated you or cut you off, and were really discourteous. It really drove me crazy."

Built for speed and efficiency, the rebuilt 1937 Buick Special keeps up with modern SUVs and gives Mitsubishi's a run for their money on both country roads and urban side streets. It can make a cross-country trip with little or no trouble, and still make heads turn.

John has a unique, historically symbiotic relationship with his car. The car still drives the road because of his modern modifications, and serves as one of the central features for the thirty-five-year-old owner's retro lifestyle.

And like the engine inside his Buick, young Stokes is something new inside something old. An aficionado of the era covering the 1920s to the 1960s, he has a special and intense affection for the 1930s. Many aspects of that decade appeal to him, starting with the clothes. Stokes' wardrobe holds a handful of 1930s suits, which he dons when he's out on the town with his young cronies (who also sport the same attire and who are around the same age) or entertaining his



fiancée at the local supper club or his favorite San Francisco gin joint.

"The clothes had a very distinct style and flair to them. They've got class, and they make you stand out, especially these days. The suits of the time make you feel like an individual. There were so many different kinds of accessories, too. Hats varied in style, but it wasn't just about the hat — it was also the way you wore it, whether pinched, crushed, shaped differently, etc. It really made the individual stand out."

Stokes had always admired the *Thin Man* movie series, and other flicks of the time. "There was something about those movies that were somewhat shadowy and mystical. The characters really looked good in the clothes. They had their own style, their own sense of presentation."



The cars of the 1930s appeal to Stokes because they have their own personalities, and they are emblematic of the individual craftsmanship of the period. "Cars of the late 1930s had these great curves, chrome, style, and the interiors were wonderfully put together. Some of those interiors were like a couch you'd have in your living room. It was upholstery sewn together, not just plastic molded into a form like most cars today. Back then, there was a



sense of professionalism at what you did, regardless of what it was. The details on these machines were amazing. Somebody put an upholstery nail here and one there. Mass production was there but not like what it is today. My dad used to say, 'Give me a symbol of your work and I will give you a symbol of you.'



When he getting his car re-chromed, Stokes found the initials of the mold-maker on the door handles. "Personalized craftsmanship is another reason why I love these cars. When I noticed the initials, I looked at it as a work of art. It was as if the mold maker were saying, 'Hey this is a part of me!' Also, the cars were so unique that people would give them monikers like 'Old Ruby' or 'Grey Ghost.' And Stokes loves the power behind the older vehicles. "I personally think that when you're driving an older car, it seems like you're driving a heavy machine."

Stokes also has always been drawn to the World War II era and the Art Deco style of the 1920s and 1930s. Much of it had to do with his own father who would frequently drive around a 1948 Chrysler. As John grew older he began to collect suits, ties and other furnishings and, to a limited extent, even using the lingo from the era. When he was in his late twenties and early thirties, he began frequenting 1930s-style nightclubs and other vintage establishments in San Francisco, and met other retro-philes who wore the same kinds of suits and drove the same kinds of cars. "I really considered myself an oddball, and then I realized there were others doing the same thing."

As he cruises down the road, Stokes likes to have the purr of his engine complemented by the full brassy sounds of Glenn Miller, Cab Calloway, Benny Goodman and other artists from the Swing Era, his favorite musical period. With that in mind, Stokes has installed a radio

in the almost all-original dashboard. The radio's knobs are original, but they operate a modern radio behind the dash.

"One thing I noticed on the '30s and '40s cars were how dimly lit the dashes were. I like a nice bright dash shining in my face. I noticed as a kid how bright the old

radios were, and I didn't know why until I took one apart. What they do is stick the light bulb in the prism of the glass. So the bulb lights up the veins of the glass! When that happens, the numbers jump right out at you like a jukebox. I also converted the clock over to quartz, so now I don't have to worry about the wiring harness burning up."

Stokes has rebuilt the car almost from scratch. His experience with working on cars since he was 18, as well as his technical savvy, has brought the '37 Buick back to life. The accident had demolished the rear end and the engine was burnt to cinders. When he and his father opted to bring the car back to its former state, rats had been nesting in the interior.

"It was pretty much a basket case. We started working on the car, but after a time I just got tired of it, and I didn't have the \$4,000.00 I needed to buy a new engine. One day I was watching the movie 'Chinatown' and I see this 1937 Buick and I thought to myself, 'Darn it, I've got this thing sitting in the basement. How come I can't get it to run?' So I started shopping around. Then, I thought, 'Well if this car is as bad as it is, and the parts are as worn out as they are, why don't I try to make it close to stock as possible, while, at the same time, have all the modern running gear and conveniences?' It would also cost less money, take less time — I can now find parts everywhere — and the car would run flawlessly."

The Buick now has a modern suspension and drive train, an engine from a 350 Chevy




Truck, a rear end from a 1959 Ranchero Ford, and a power steering unit from a 1969 Chevy Malibu ("So I don't leave my kidney on the front seat when I make left turns," Stokes adds). "I can also run a pressurized radiator system now and not worry about the engine overheating on a hot summer's day. And it's also got power brakes. If you're not into it 110% you're going to fry a bearing." The car's exterior has been so flawlessly reconstructed it is nearly impossible to recognize any changes.

The Buick's heart-red interior is so plush it resembles the cushions from an 18th Century divan. "I wanted to get one of those Hampton Coach interiors, which cost a grand, without the cost of the upholsterer installing it. Luckily, a friend of mine happens to be an upholsterer, and once I got that done I put in the headliner and carpets, the instrumentation, electrical, dash, all that kind of stuff."

The '37 Buick is not a hot rod, a type of vehicle that many consider as being nothing more than a souped-up engine inside a casing of ugly old sheet metal. Stokes bristles when his car is sometimes deemed one. "It is definitely NOT a hot rod," Stokes strongly asserts. "The thought of that really makes my-toes curl. The way I put this car together was with the original running height, original rims, tires and whitewalls. I've even installed a phony clutch pedal that doesn't do anything. I tracked down an original shifter that looks like the original stick shift. You wouldn't know that the car was 'modern' for the drive train, unless you opened

up the motor or crawled underneath. I'm not into chopping off the roof and lowering the vehicle so it's an inch from the ground. That is absolutely not my style."

In addition, hot rods are typically built for speed and not for style. They also make a deep rumbling sound (from their V8 engines) when they roll down the road, while the '37 Buick is as quiet as a lady's whisper. "It took a long time to find someone that could build headers that were insulated enough where they would be quiet and not get that 'tingy' noise of the valves opening up. I found this shop that made the car really quiet. Cadillac quiet. The new designed exhaust system has a large truck muffler and a dual resonator, which quiets the car down and makes it sound like a straight-8." Stokes has maintained the Buick's historical style and dignity by keeping most of its physical features intact. Though it contains a modern engine, it has not been butchered to fit the needs of most latter-day speed freaks. "There are a lot of aficionados out there that don't appreciate the fact that I modernized the car, but I'm going for the practical view and now it's a safe, reliable car. I also wanted it to resemble something off the showroom floor as closely as I can get it."

The elegant 1930s fashions have all but faded into obscurity and many of the Buicks from that era have stalled along the shoulder of the history's road. But with Stokes' love of the past, a new renaissance in old car restoration, where modern technology powers vehicles of yore, might well be a thing of the future. 



# TALE **UPDATED** OF TWO BUICKS

*Continuation of an article published in the July/August 2003 issue.*

*By Jon Kanas, Longmont, Colorado*




*Going out for a summer ride.*

In our last episode we brought the Buick Century home, along with one fuel tank, one radiator and some other stuff too. Later, we took her out on the requisite summer rides until the charging system stopped working and the 30-plus year-old bias recaps became too suspect.

Dr. Z's family unearthed some family photographs showing the doctor using this very same Century while making house calls. This picture below was taken in the late 50's, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, looking west from near the intersection of Fountain and Institute Streets. Note Pike's Peak in the background.

As of this writing the charging system works and the wheels are being painted in preparation for the Coker Classic Radials. We should be out and about again in time to witness the turning of the aspens in the Colorado high country! We want to enjoy the Buick now because the disassembly, in preparation for a full restoration, is scheduled to begin as soon as it gets cold and snowy out. Pictures of the project are posted on our website on a rather erratic basis:

[http://www.qadas.com/~kanas/Vehicles/Buick\\_Index.htm](http://www.qadas.com/~kanas/Vehicles/Buick_Index.htm) 





# VICTORIAN BUICK

## **1938 Buick 8/90, Martin & King body, Built For Victorian Premier Hon. A. A. Dunstan**

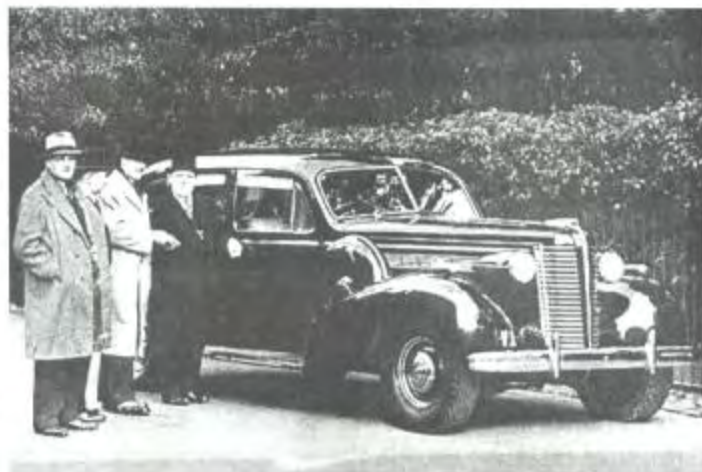
*Article Reproduced from The Australian Motorist, September 1, 1938.*

*Researched and written by Eric North. Permission to republish article came from the Buick Car Club of Australia.*

**B**uilt to the special requirements and specifications of the Victorian Government for use by the Premier and for official occasions, this very handsome 1938 8/90 Buick Sedan is the largest model in the Buick series, and the only one of its design made in Australia.

The chassis, which was imported by Preston Motors Pty. Ltd., from General Motors' Canadian BUICK Factory, is a replica of that recently purchased by the Duke of Kent.


The body was designed and fabricated by Martin & King Pty. Ltd., of Malvern. Its construction includes extremely comfortable seating for eight passengers, constructed of springs, sponge rubber and down and covered in soft crushed hand-buffed chrome leather. The front seat is easily adjustable, and extra space has been provided between the rear and front seats to give



ample leg room to passengers using the occasional seats, which are recessed into the back of the front seat. Ample provision has been made for ceremonial occasions when top hats are the vogue. The all-steel Australian

body has been well insulated against noise, and the doors are extra large to give easy access to the car.

Provision has been made to use the car as a mobile office, with reading lamps arranged to permit working at night without glare. Clocks are fitted in both front and rear compartments, and a radio is fitted into the dash.

The car provides safety and convenience for long distance travel, and, in addition, a very capacious luggage compartment. The body exterior is finished in metropolitan blue, with fawn interior trimmings, offset by walnut polished cappings. 



*1938 Buick 90 "Martin & King body" for the Victorian Government. Picture contributed by Norm Darwin*

# 1938 Buick Century Stirs Them Up at Eastern Creek Raceway

by John Neale/ Buick Car Club of Australia Inc. in N.S.W.

[www.buickclub.org.au](http://www.buickclub.org.au)

Here's Ron Neale, a member of the Buick Car Club of Australia Inc., participating in a Regularity Trial at Eastern Creek Raceway. Ron normally competes in a high-performance Nissan, but when he decided that he wanted a bit more of a challenge he purchased a 1938 Century.

The only changes he made to the Buick were to convert it to 12-volt, tune the engine, put on a new set of radial tires, fit a bonnet strap and, finally, attach a catch tank on the engine breather. Then it was off to the track for a couple of hot laps.

Ron said the car handled extremely well for what it is, and, after a couple of laps, he found

that there was no need to shift down to second gear for the corners because of the enormous torque of the Century engine. He got good results by leaving it in top gear, pointing it at the corner and hanging on.

Ron is also a member of the Historic Sporting Car Club. Their preferred choice of cars run to MGs, Jaguars and Austin Healeys, so you can imagine the interest when Ron rolled up in a 1938 Buick. As Ron told the other drivers at drivers briefing, "I have two tons of car with heaps of power and at this stage I don't know if it will stop, so better give me plenty of room." ■





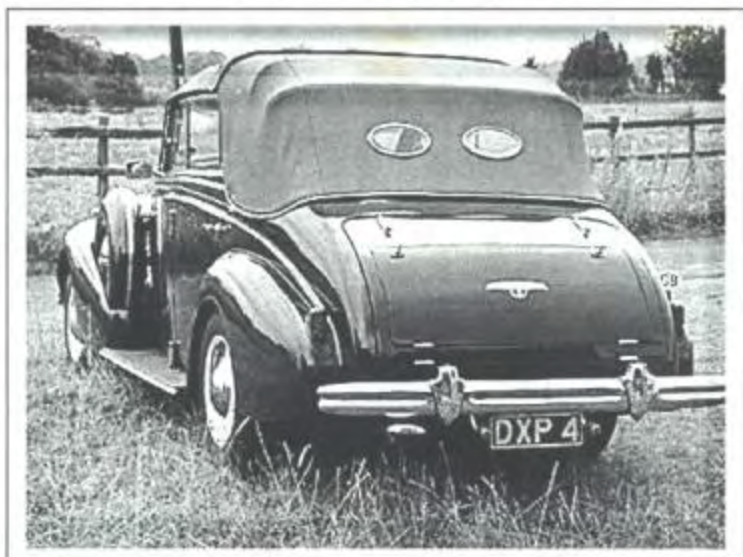
# 1937 BUICK SPECIAL REDFERN SALOON-TOURER

by Paul DeLucchi (#1246)

Stanley Mann Racing, a vintage Bentley dealer in the U.K., recently sold the 1937 Buick pictured here. Export chassis no. 744160816, carrying engine no. 3187355, was originally purchased by British agents, then sent to Maltby's coachworks in Folkstone. This body style is their Redfern Saloon-Tourer.



Aluminum panels on steel framework reduce the weight somewhat. B-pillars carry the door hinges, and the "cant" of that center post is adjustable to ensure proper door alignment. Window frames are of plated brass.



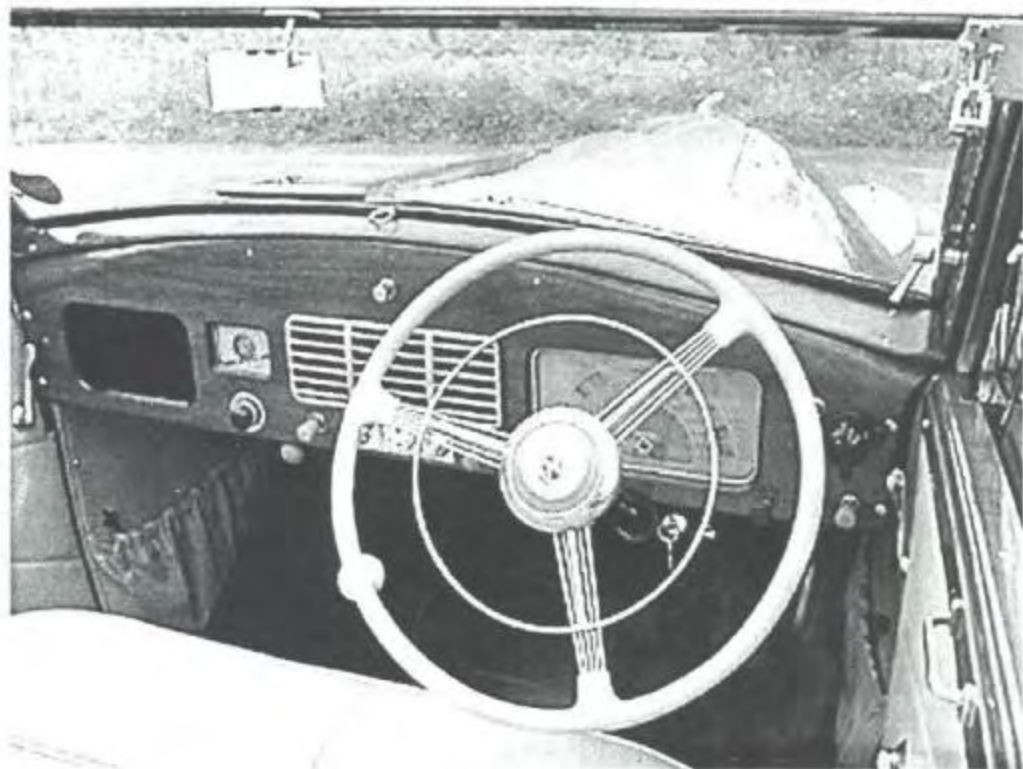
A trunk lid within a trunk lid?  
The oval rear windows certainly add style if not much rearward visibility.



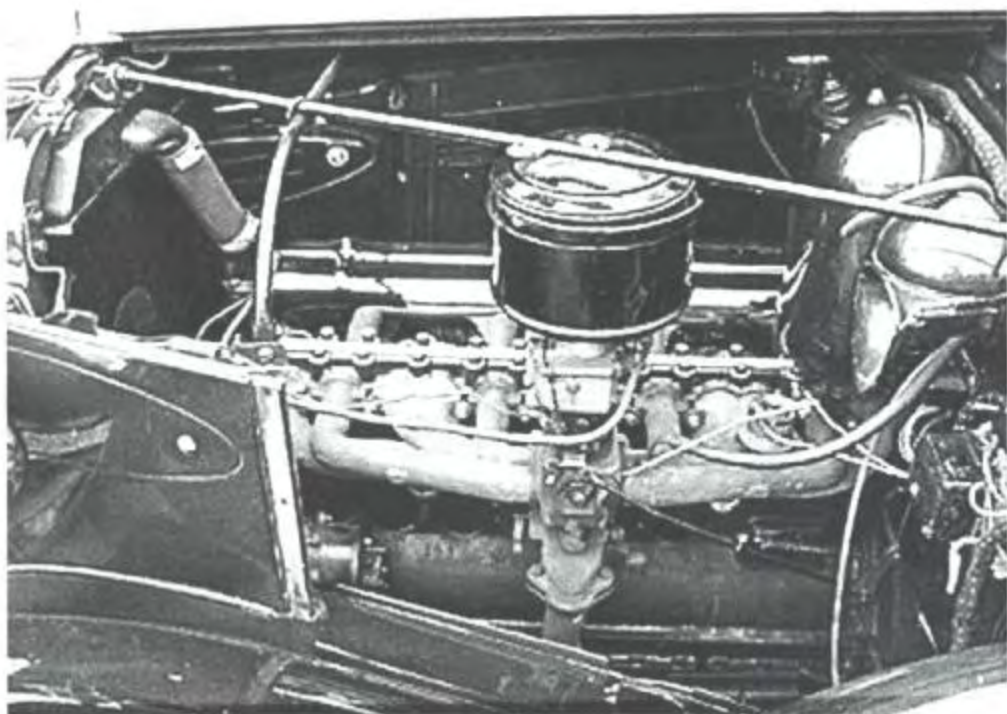
Convertible top is power-actuated! Maltby's had the first fully automatic hydraulic power hood (top) on a car. This accomplishment won first prize at a motor show in Olympia (U.K.). On May 28, 1937 a patent was granted to Maltby's Motor Works and Francis Henry Redfern for a "silent, rigid and easily working hood". It was also offered in combination with a "Jackall" automated jacking system for wheel changing.



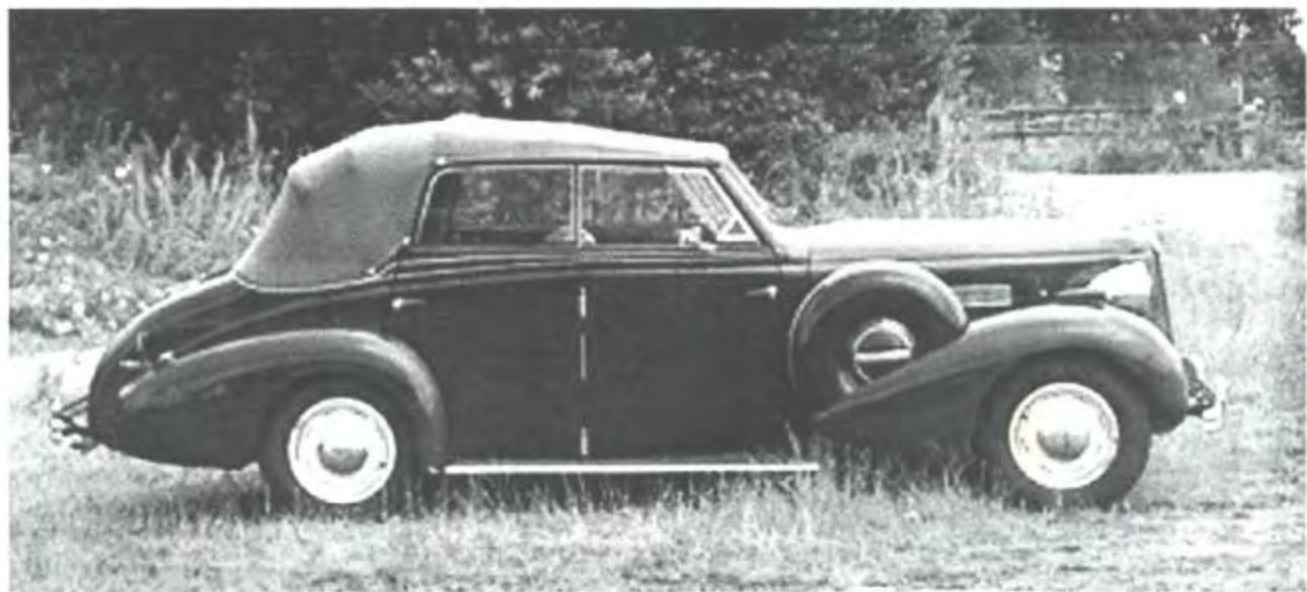
There are a few things recognizably Buick here, but not many.







Documentation says the engine has been rebuilt. Looks like someone plated both the valve cover and horns while they were at it. Notice the teardrop impression where the standard headlamp housing was removed.



Amazing how an American product can look so utterly British. Look closely at the gap between the front and rear doors, between the two hinges. You can just make out the "semaphore trafficators" turn signals that pivot out when in use. To ensure they wouldn't be snapped off by anyone opening a door while they were raised, each door was fitted with a circuit breaker.

Redfern Tourer bodies rode various chassis: Rolls-Royce, Lagonda, Armstrong-Siddeley, Buick, Oldsmobile and even Ford. The last of them was completed in 1939. 🏠

"The Automobile" magazine (U.K.) 1999, was a source for some of the information presented here.

# The Man About Models

By Giancarlo Davis (#1748)

Photos provided by Ronn Pittman (#1188)



**Ronn Pittman** (#1188) owns over 20,000 cars. The Illinois automobile buff not only built most of them and has kept each one clean and maintained, he stores them all, for the most part, in one room. That's because most of his cars are only a fraction of the size of typical

automobiles: they're models. The cabinets in his basement are stuffed with a wide array of model cars from each decade in myriad colors and styles. The Tom Thumb-sized vehicles not only have brought him local and national recognition, they helped accelerate him into the automotive







world where he learned how to do body work, engine work and, most importantly, old car restoration. They were also the seeds of his obsession that grew into real full-sized car collecting, including Buicks from the late 1930s.

It all started with a model of a 1949 Ford his aunt gave him when he was a kid for Christmas. The desire to build things seemed to flow through his blood. In the 1950s he made his first models of wood, then, later on, of plastic. His car collection slowly multiplied. By the time he was an adolescent, he turned his attention to making them of metal and steel. He took diversified occupational courses in high school and, at the age of 16, found employment in a local body shop. When an economic recession hit a year later, Pittman was let go and almost doomed to the drudgery of finding a normal 9-to-5 job. Fate, however, intervened when a high school instructor contacted a local mechanic who put Pittman to work on engines. Later, he graduated from a Chicago technical school and found a job in a Pontiac store where he worked for 20 years. Pittman is now retired, but his enthusiasm for cars and collecting still sees a working day.

Pittman began purchasing promotional models from car companies in Detroit. As his model car accumulation grew to enormous proportions, stores began buying the models from him. His models appeared in international collectors' publications such as *Spinoff* magazine (where a number of his models have been featured in every issue). But Pittman didn't just amass miniatures. It was only natural that the automobile industry veteran would collect real cars. Now, he owns over 20, 17 of which are classic, but only three of those are under restoration.

These days, it's the model companies that are approaching Pittman. They've produced miniature-sized replicas of his full-sized 1949 Cadillac, 1956 Chevrolet Nomad and 1960 Chevrolet Impala. "It's a real honor," Pittman says. "Seven of my real cars have been used by various companies to create scale models. Five are being used for Monogram (a die-cast car company). One of my cars, a 1955 Safari, was used by *Road Champs* collector magazine to do a 1/43-scale model. My '49 Cadillac was used by the Model House in Decatur, Illinois, which is a small cottage industry manufacturer. It was



great. Nobody had done a model of that one."

While he'd rather be cruising down the street in a car from the 1950s or 1960s, he still loves his 1937 Buick Century Touring Sedan and his 1938 Buick Coupe, both of which he uses for special events. "What's fun is to take both of them to a show or a cruise night,"

Pittman says. "It's unusual for people to see one of them, but when they see both, oh man! The back of the 1937 has plenty of room, and I can use the car for weddings. Last summer I drove a bride and groom in it to their wedding. It's got a 126-inch wheel-

base and the interior is very roomy. They got to choose from the Buick, a 1955 Desoto and a 1949 Cadillac. They liked the Cadillac, but chose the '37 Buick to drive in. It was a must."

His appreciation for the 1937 and 1938 Buicks ("Not '35s and '36s and not '39s and '40s," he says) has plenty to do with his

grandfather, who owned a 1937 Chevy pickup and a 1938 maroon sedan. His uncle owned a 1937 Buick as well. "I can still remember riding in those. Additionally, one of my neighbors owned a black 1937 sedan and another one owned a 1938 Buick Century. That neighbor, who is 84 years old, and I still swap stories

regularly, he has told me many times how fast his '38 Century would go. So my family's and neighbor's influence had a strong impact on my interest in those cars." In 2002, Pittman bought his '37, and shortly thereafter his '38 from former *Torque Tube*

magazine editor **Harry Logan** (#651) who lives in Los Altos, California. "Ironically, Harry lived only two blocks away from where I bought my '37!" Ronn says.


A few model makers have been keenly eyeing Pittmann's two Buicks. That excites Pittman who has seen very few decently fashioned replicas.





"Two companies have strong interest in the '37 and '38 Buicks. A company that made a die-cast model of my '65 Impala said that my '37 was interesting material for a model. Right now, things are a little held back because of economics. The Monogram Company I use keeps changing its focus. Right now they're doing more of that 'Fast and Furious' [a movie that features modern racing cars] stuff. A big percentage of buyers are adults.

What they're trying to do is aim at the younger markets to get the kids involved."

In an era where speed can be experienced by looking through a virtual windshield in a video game, a younger generation's patience to build and collect models, especially those of old cars, may well have fallen by the wayside. But one glimpse at Pittman's colorful treasure trove of automotive relics, both full-sized and scaled down, may well restore that enthusiasm. 

*Right: Ronn at the age of one with his grandfather in 1942. Bottom: Ronn now with his grandson and his 1937 Buick.*





## Technical TIPS

# PAINTING YOUR 1938 GRILL

By Gary Glazier (#1005)

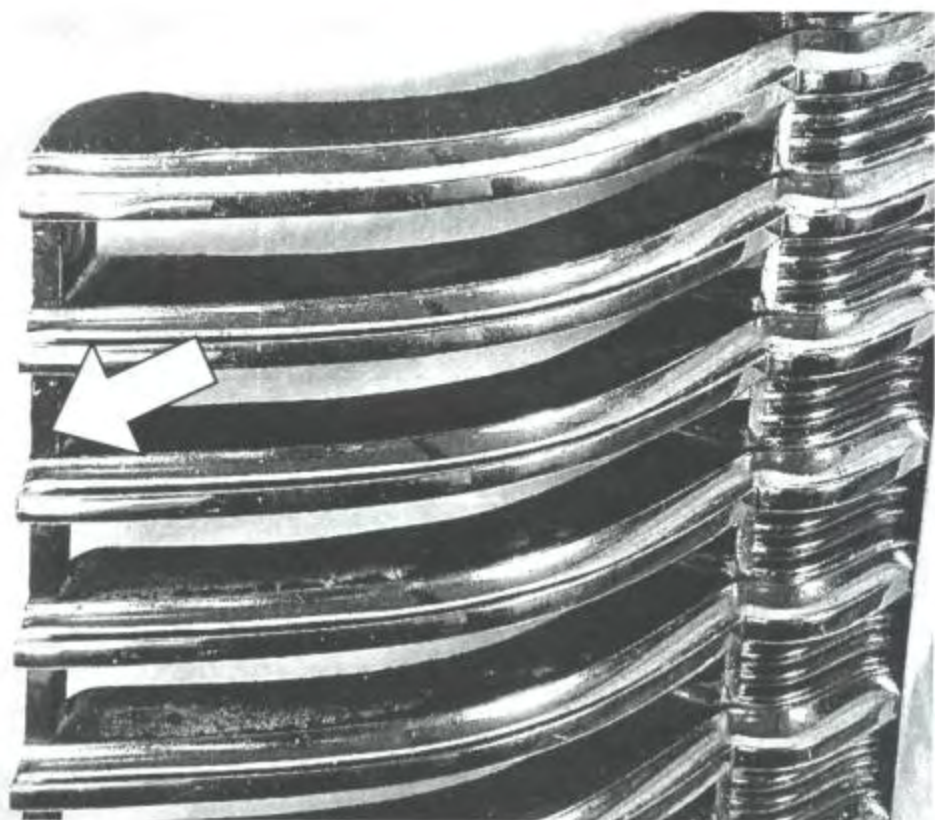
Photos by Mark Jordan (#1297)

Just re-chroming your grille halves is not the whole story to restoring your 1938 grille. Portions of the grille were originally painted black. I did mine with glossy lacquer and it looks fine. However, originals were probably a flatter black. If desired, roughen surfaces to be painted with fine sandpaper for better adhesion.



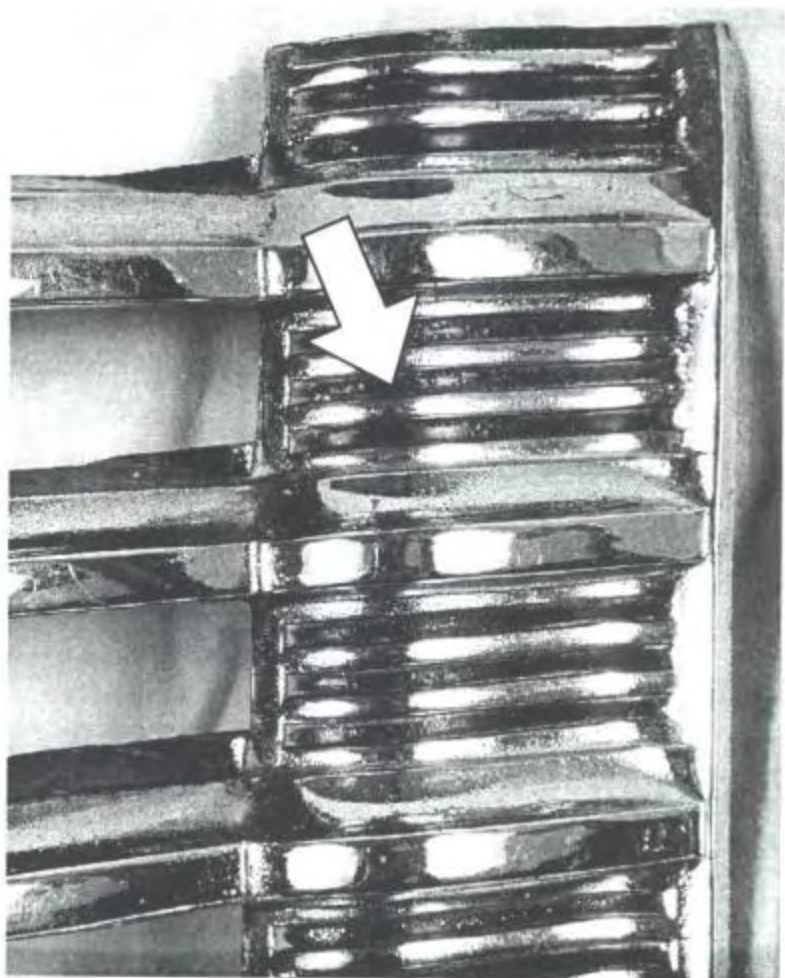
**BAR TOPS:** Each of the 18 horizontal bars (per side) is painted on top. Only the concave and flat surfaces at the front are chrome. The top surfaces are often pitted and painting shops do not want to fill in the pits. Spraying heavy coats from the back of the grille filled in the pits adequately and no masking was necessary. Remember to wipe off over spray from the chrome surfaces quickly.





**BAR SEPARATORS:** There are 17 bar separators at the center portion of each grille half. These were easily painted with a small artist's brush.

**ORNAMENTAL GROOVES:** The outboard edge of each grille has 54 horizontal grooves that must be filled with paint. Using a brush did not work so I purchased a cheap 1/16 inch striping tool from J.C. Whitney. It worked surprisingly well in filling the grooves and only a minor brush touch-up was need.







## Technical TIPS

By the TT Staff

# ANTI-FREEZE & WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Anti-freeze is more than a liquid that keeps the engine toasty over the long winter months. It's a chemical that does much more.

Water is the main component in the car's cooling system. However, it can also be very corrosive to metals in the cooling system. Hard water is even more impure, containing such impurities as calcium, magnesium, iron and other metals. We will start with the basics of a typical anti-freeze formulation to explain how these problems are overcome.

A typical container of anti-freeze is 95% glycol (the ingredient that prevents freezing and extreme boiling). Its chemical name is ethylene glycol. Creating a mixture of 68% glycol and 32% water will give your engine maximum protection against extreme temperature changes. Many companies will in-

struct on using less, so remember that more is not better. If too much glycol is added to the mixture, then there is not enough water in the system to give the best cooling and protection.

Water is a necessity. Anti-freeze alone cannot work, since it requires water to undergo a key chemical reaction. The proper quantity of water is also important since water keeps the other ingredients in the anti-freeze formulation in solution, such as corrosion inhibitors. Too little anti-freeze (less than 33%) does not give the system adequate levels of corrosion inhibitors. For this reason, a 50/50 water-to-anti-freeze mixture is typically recommended for most climates. Most automobiles are designed to operate effectively within this ratio.

In addition to the glycol, the other important part of every anti-freeze formula is the corrosion

inhibitor package. It's called a 'package' because it is made of several different chemicals that keep the water from corroding your radiator, water pump and engine water passages. The package makes up about 1% of the anti-freeze formula, but despite the small percentage, it is still very important.

The job of the corrosion inhibitor package is to prevent water damage. The package normally does this by chemically bonding to all internal parts, forming a thin film through-

out the cooling system to protect it from the actions of the water. This chemical film is so thin it cannot be easily seen or measured and does not interfere with the normal transfer of heat that occurs in engines. Systems using aluminum or aluminum alloy parts require special treatment. Aluminum

systems must have a specially formulated package that includes different additives for the needed protection.

In addition, other chemicals in the package prevent the formation of scale. Scale prevents efficient cooling (heat transfer) in your radiator since it builds up and thickly coats the engine parts. A radiator tube, coated with scale, cannot effectively do its job of transferring heat from the engine to the atmosphere. Scale is that white powdery substance that appears alongside the internal cooling jacket and the radiator tubes when the radiator is removed for servicing. Too much scale causes overheating.

Lastly, anti-freezes contain additional chemicals that have important jobs, such as water pump lubricants and antifoaming agents.





Others, such as dyes or colorants, are purely cosmetic and serve no other purpose save brand identification. Most consumers feel more comfortable with the greenish-gold color that Prestone makes.

Why do so many people have problems with their cooling systems, and why do most drivers need to change their coolant so often? The answer is painfully simple; the chemicals in anti-freeze have a limited life span and wear out over time. The inside of the cooling system, where temperatures exceed 200 degrees Fahrenheit, is a harsh environment. The heat and constant agitation slowly break down the chemicals in the additive package as well as degrading the amount of glycol in the system. The glycol can degrade to form acids from the heat, which compounds the problem. Even in cars that are driven sparingly the anti-corrosive properties of anti-freeze slowly decline in time due to the depletion of the additive package.

The result of all this is that you no longer have adequate levels of corrosion protection. You also may not have adequate levels of freeze/boil protection, due to the degraded glycol. Continued use and not changing the anti-freeze gradually creates a radiator clogged with rust, dirt and scale resulting from the corrosion of the system. Many cooling system problems are simply due to neglect in proper servicing and changing of the coolant. The newer extended-life anti-freeze formulations have additives with a different chemistry vs. standard anti-freeze, but even these still have a finite life. The old standard mechanic's test of checking the cooling system liquid with a hydrometer only measures if you have got the correct amount of glycol by looking at the specific gravity of the liquid. This test cannot, however, tell you anything about the amount of additives left in the system. Spe-

cial testing equipment is needed for this that is not normally available at a local garage.

There are several troubleshooting recommendations made through the years by collectors and owners of older vehicles. The first is to change your anti-freeze at least once every two years. If your manufacturer has no specific recommendation, use a 50/50 mixture of anti-freeze to water. Secondly, be especially cautious if your vehicle has an aluminum cooling system or if it is made from any aluminum parts. Be diligent about changing your anti-freeze and follow recommended change intervals. Only use anti-freeze that is specifically recommended as being compatible and designed for use with aluminum systems.



Do not use hard water in your vehicle's cooling system. Local tap water may fall into this category. Use of distilled water together with the proper anti-freeze is best (distilled water is recommended by GM).

Do not refill a dirty cooling system with fresh anti-freeze. The corrosion inhibitor additives can only prevent the problem; they do not remove rust and scale already present in the system. If the system has been neglected to this point, you must clean and flush the system first. Severe problems, such as a clogged radiator or heater core, can mean a trip to the radiator repair shop for professional treatment.

Do not store anti-freeze in containers for more than two years. The important additive package may settle out of the solution and remain at the bottom of the jug when you empty it.

Lastly, do not mix different types or brands of anti-freeze when refilling your system. This practice, as well as using extra additives, can lead to problems such as foaming that prevent efficient cooling. ■

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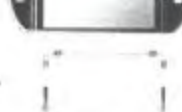
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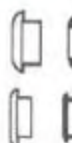
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